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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000669

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
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SUBJECT: MANSOUR KHALID ON SPLM PREPARATIONS FOR PARTY
CONVENTION

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Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY

11. (C) Everything is on track for the SPLM convention to go forward May 10, GOS Presidential Advisor and prominent SPLM northerner Dr. Mansour Khalid told CDA and polchief April 29.

Khalid expects full support for Salva Kiir as Chairman of the party as "no one would dare stand against him." Khalid said Pagan Amun has a good chance of retaining his post as *Secretary* General of the party, although Nhial Deng Nhial and Abdel Aziz Helou may also be strong candidates. Khalid expressed concern about GOSS Vice President Riek Machar as a possible spoiler, describing him as "a man in a hurry." Khalid is also worried about the armed militias of Paulino Matip and to a lesser extent Riek Machar (both former Nuer warlords now ostensibly part of the SPLM/SPLA). Khalid said Paulino may have as many as 1000 armed bodyguards in Juba, and didn't discount that it may have been these soldiers who perpetrated the armed robberies against INGOs over the last two months. Machar's personal force is smaller, in the hundreds of men.

SPLM CONVENTION

12. (C) Despite rumors that the SPLM convention will be postponed, Khalid insisted that it will go forward as planned on May 10 in Juba. "Everyone is ready" and all preparations are on track, said Khalid. He confidently predicted that the party will support President Kiir to continue as head of the SPLM, as "no one would dare stand against him." Khalid said current SPLM Secretary General and Minister of Cabinet Affairs Pagan Amun would likely be re-elected, but acknowledged there is a chance that someone else in the party may unseat him. Khalid pointed to battle-hardened commanders and well-known SPLM figures who have recently returned to Sudan such as Nhial Deng Nhial and Abdel Aziz Helou as possible candidates, but noted that although Nhial Deng is an "incorruptible" intellectual he is not a good communicator. Khalid said that once the Secretary General is identified, the next task will be to identify a chairman of the SPLM Political Bureau, who will then propose the names of other members of the bureau. (Note: From other sources, we have heard that the convention will also produce a new secretary general for each state, and that southern state governors may lose their current dual role as state-level SPLM secretary

general. End note.)

SPOILERS

13. (C) Khalid identified Nuer leader and current GOSS Vice President, the scheming Riek Machar and former GNU Foreign Minister and SPLM turncoat Lam Akol as possible spoilers, but said for now their ability to cause problems is limited. Khalid said that during the recent turmoil over whether to proceed with the census in the South, the only minister who stood with Riek against Kiir was Riek's own wife Angelina Teny (GNU Minister of State for Energy and Mines). "Riek is a man in a hurry," observed Khalid, "but he is going to have to wait his turn." However Khalid expressed concern about the number of weapons in Juba and suggested that the "private armies" of Riek Machar and Paulino Matip (former SSDF commander now incorporated into the SPLA) should be disarmed. "Riek is playing on Paulino," said Khalid, and this has resulted not just in an increase in crime and instability in Juba, but intrigue and instability in the oil-rich Nuer heartland of Unity and Upper Nile states. Khalid said Paulino has a personal militia of at least 1000 men in Juba, and did not discount that the recent crime wave of armed robberies, carried out by gangs of armed men, were perpetrated by Paulino's militia.

KHARTOUM DYNAMICS

14. (C) Khalid said that, ironically, the only person in the GNU who currently appreciates the role of the SPLM is Ahmed Harun (ICC indictee and current State Minister of Humanitarian Affairs). Khalid said Harun had engaged sincerely on Abyei and other issues. Khalid described Presidential Advisor Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail as "cynical"

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and discounted Vice President Taha as being "kept out of the picture." However, he said Taha has not given up hope of undermining President Al-Bashir's hold on the military and on the NCP's own armed militia. "He is working on these people" by appealing to the religious side of the regime. Khalid said the regime is still nervous about opposition Popular Congress Party leader Hassan al Turabi, who originally organized the National Islamic Front movement (the foundation of the NCP) and still appeals to the true believers in the NCP. Khalid observed that all of the oil money flowing into Khartoum had done nothing to consolidate the regime and had only provided financing for pay-offs.

ELECTIONS

15. (C) When asked how committed the SPLM is to elections, Khalid did not answer directly. He noted that the SPLM is beyond challenge in the South and could form strong national alliances with other marginalized groups such as the Beja in the East, or even with middle of the road parties such as the DUP (Mirghani faction). However, he said an alliance with both is not possible because the Beja are against the Khatemia Sufi sect (from which DUP/Mirghani hails). Khalid predicted that Salva Kiir will not run for President. "The CPA was created with John Garang in mind" and Salva is not comfortable with northern politics, where he feels "like an alien." Unlike Kiir who spends all of his time in Juba where he is more comfortable, Garang could direct things in the South from Khartoum and knew how to interact with northern political parties. On a positive note, Khalid predicted that if Salva gets a second term as GOSS President, he is unlikely to stay on beyond that and "is not going to become a Mugabe, or even a Museveni." CDA pointed out all of the positive things that Kiir has done and rule policies of the North or the divisive intrigues of some in the SPLM like Riek.

COMMENT

16. (C) A former Foreign Minister who threw in his lot with John Garang's rebels, Khalid's observations about destabilizing elements in the South such as Riek Machar and Paulino Matip are familiar and credible. Other observers have suggested that Paulino Matip's ill-disciplined militia may be responsible for the recent and very disturbing series of armed robberies by groups of up to twenty men in Juba. If this is true, the GOSS will need to act swiftly to bring justice to those responsible, contain this serious security threat (not just for NGOs, but also for the regime) and either better integrate these soldiers into the SPLA or disarm them. Khalid's comments regarding the SPLM convention appear to be on the mark, but there are sure to be some surprises and we don't discount that there may be a significant adjustment in the SPLM leadership coming out of the convention. He is one of many senior SPLM officials uncomfortable about elections that could be easily manipulated by the NCP.
FERNANDEZ